GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:4
ANSWERED ON:21.07.2015
Kasturirangan Report on Western Ghats
Reddy Shri J.C. Divakar

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the major recommendations made by the High Level Working Group (HLWG) under the Chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasturirangan on eco-sensitive zones in the Western Ghats;
(b) the follow up action taken by the Government on the recommendations of HLWG;
(c) whether certain States and some stakeholders of the region have expressed their concerns/apprehensions over the implementation of the recommendation of Kasturirangan report;
(d) if so, the details thereof; and
(e) the remedial measures taken by the Government to address their concerns?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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Statement in reply to Parts (a) to (e) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 4 for reply on 21.7.2015 regarding Kasturirangan Report on Western Ghats raised by Shri J.C. Divakar Reddy.

(a) & (b): Major recommendations of the High Level Working Group (HLWG) inter alia relate to (i) identification of eco-sensitive area in the Western Ghats region, (ii) regulation/prohibition of certain activities in the eco-sensitive area, and (iii) measures for incentivizing green growth in Western Ghats region.

As part of post-HLWG report follow-up activities, the Ministry issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 13th November 2013 in order to provide immediate protection to the Western Ghats and to maintain its environmental integrity. As per the Directions, five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities which have maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on ecosystems shall not be considered for granting Environmental Clearance in the Ecologically Sensitive Area, as identified by the High Level Working Group, in the Western Ghats. The Ministry also issued a draft notification declaring Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 in the Gazette of India vide S.O. No 733 (E) dated 10th March 2014 inviting suggestions and objections from stakeholders on the proposals contained in the draft notification.

(c) to (e): Concerns have been raised by certain states of the Western Ghats region about the extent of proposed eco-sensitive area and the proposed regulation/prohibition of certain activities in this area. Apprehensions have also been raised on issues relating to existing land use and any changes proposed to activities such as agriculture, plantations and continued occupation of land in possession of local people as well as to ongoing projects/ activities. This Ministry had attempted to address some of the concerns and apprehensions through the OM issued on 20th December 2013.

Some of the State Governments in the Western Ghats have conveyed that they would like to undertake the exercise of demarcating ESA by physical verification as has been already done by the State of Kerala. This Ministry has accordingly given an opportunity to State Governments of the Western Ghats region for undertaking demarcation of ESA by physical verification within their jurisdiction except for Kerala State which has already undertaken such an exercise.

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